



Canada's crumbling infrastructure: the silence is deafening

By Barrie McKenna, *The Globe and Mail*

With a federal election in full swing, the sad state of the country's roads, ports, electrical grid and more is barely a blip on the radar.

Elections should be the time to discuss the big issues. That's rarely how it works. True to form, the parties aren't talking seriously in this election about health care, climate change or Canada's role in two foreign wars.

Here's another big one that probably won't come up in the televised leaders debate: the decrepit state of Canada's public infrastructure.

Consider Montreal's Champlain Bridge, a 50-year-old landmark and a vital transportation link to the bustling South Shore and beyond. Ravaged by salt, it is literally falling into the St. Lawrence River, chunk by chunk. Engineers believe it might have, at best, 10 to 15 years of life left in it, and even the belated \$212-million Ottawa has earmarked for repairs might not be enough to save the bridge.

If a major earthquake were to strike the city (and Montreal sits in an active quake zone), Canada's busiest bridge likely wouldn't last more than a few minutes. "This bridge can be expected to collapse, partially or altogether, in a significant seismic event," engineers at Delcan noted matter-of-factly in a recent report. That's not "might" or "could." The experts are

pretty much saying it will.

It's hard to underplay the urgency. A replacement to the Champlain Bridge could take 15 years, or the outer lifespan of the existing bridge (cost: at least \$1-billion). That's just one city, and one bridge. Across Canada, key pieces of vital public infrastructure badly need fixing or replacing. There are roads and bridges, water and sewer plants, public transit networks, parks and ports.

Here's a number to ponder: \$123-billion. That's what the Canadian Federation of Municipalities estimated it would cost, four years ago, to renew aging municipal infrastructure. Roughly 60 per cent of the money is needed for transportation, water and sewage treatment.

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Infrastructure Investment (continued from page 1)

That's just part of the story. As the country grows and expands, new demands emerge, such as transit expansions and new sewage treatment capacity (cost: \$115-billion). Now we're at \$238-billion and counting. And that's just for municipal infrastructure.

The Champlain Bridge is owned by the federal government. Meanwhile, the major highways that Canadians depend on, both for commuting and travelling between cities, are largely in provincial hands. The provinces spend roughly \$8-billion a year on transportation projects. They arguably could spend a lot more and our highways still wouldn't match what Americans have.

And the electrical grid needs \$293.8-billion in improvements, according to a Conference Board of Canada report.

How did we put ourselves in this hole? Neglect, underinvestment and skewed priorities.

The Conservative government's \$60-billion Economic Action Plan is all but gone, and the legacy is underwhelming. A quarter of the money supposedly went into infrastructure. As much as \$20-million more was spent advertising the plan.

In its eagerness to get the money out the door fast to "shovel-ready" projects, the money was sprinkled across the country on mainly small, local projects. The Action Plan website highlights transmission lines and waste-water projects. More typically, the money went to hockey rinks, park benches and planters. Small-town thinking applied to big-world problems.

It was an opportunity lost. Ottawa and most of the provinces are now in austerity mode, and there will be less money for infrastructure in the years ahead.

If there is a silver lining to this grim situation, it just might be buried in another Conference Board report. It turns out governments aren't very efficient at pricing and planning our infrastructure. We waste too much water (a Canadian uses more than the twice the water a Briton does). And we don't allocate our infrastructure very efficiently. We provide transit to ever-distant suburbs, but don't make these users pay the real cost, or even the incremental cost of expansion.

We can probably squeeze a lot more out of the dollars we spend, the Conference Board argued. "Enhancing pricing policies and productivity will create or free up resources that can be used to better achieve other social objectives, while also helping to reduce the infrastructure gap," the report concluded. "All options will have to be on the table."

Simply curbing our water consumption to international norms would cut the infrastructure gap by \$4-billion, the report pointed out.

It's inevitable that Canada will have to spend a lot more on large, critical infrastructure. Conservative Leader Stephen Harper might point to his pledge of loan guarantees for Labrador's Lower Churchill hydro project. But that's for the future. It won't do anything about all the infrastructure that needs replacing now. Big challenges demand big thinking - especially at election time.

MHCA Welcomes New Members!

Vic's Enterprises Ltd.

Victor Cure
Box 325
St. Malo, MB R0A 1T0

Ph: (204) 740-5531 | Fax: (204) 347-5713
Email: paulettecure@hotmail.com
Additional Information: Services include excavating, water/ sewer services, transportation of aggregates, snow removal, earthworks, and ditch digging.

Balaz Construction Ltd.

Dan Balazovic
475 Swailes Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2V 1R7

Ph: (204) 338-2077
Email: balazcon@gmail.com
Additional Information: Specializes in earthmoving with motor scraper and bulldozers. Also have hourly equipment rentals and other general contracting services as requested.



Manitoba Heavy Construction Association's Annual

Spring Mixer



Wednesday June 8, 2011 | Assiniboia Downs

Reception – 5:30pm

Dinner – 6:00pm

Live Racing – 7:00pm

Tickets: \$70.00 +GST/person

****Seating is limited. To order tickets, fax form back to 943-2279:**

Company: _____

Number of tickets (tables of 8): _____ Contact person: _____

Payment Options:

Invoice: _____ Visa/MC/AMX #: _____ Exp: _____

Signature: _____

For more information please contact Christine at the MHCA office @
phone: 947-1379, fax: 943-2279 or by email at christine@mhca.mb.ca

*As per MHCA Board Policy, only registrations cancelled 72 hours prior to
the commencement of this event will be refunded.*





Manitoba Heavy Construction Association's Annual

Spring Mixer | Sponsorship Opportunities

Wednesday June 8, 2011 at The Assiniboia Downs

Want to be an event sponsor at this year's MHCA's Spring Mixer?

For \$425.00 + GST – here's what you get:

- A race that evening named in your company's honor
- Recognition in the MHCA Dinner Program
- After the race, go down to the winner's circle and get your picture taken with the winning race horse
- One 8 x 10 keep sake picture and engraved trophy
- **A great opportunity to take friends or customers with you to the winner's circle** (maximum 6 pp)
- Signage with your company logo at the event that night for over 425 people from the heavy construction industry to see
- Recognition in the Assiniboia Downs Event Program
- A 'Thank You' recognition in the MHCA *Heavy News Weekly*



****There are only 8 races that evening, so this great sponsorship is limited.****

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY!

Yes, our company would like to be an event sponsor for the MHCA Spring Mixer.

Company: _____

Contact Person: _____ Ph: _____

Please invoice us: _____ Visa/MC/AMEX#: _____ Expiry: _____

Fax: (204) 943-2279

Ph: (204) 947-1379

New Red River College Degree Prepares Students For Productive Career In Construction Management

Those seeking to launch or advance a successful career in the building industry will get a boost this fall when classes once again get underway in the third year of Red River College's new Construction Management degree program. Designed to help those in the skilled trades and engineering or engineering technologies bridge into further post-secondary education, the new RRC offering focuses on heavy construction, industrial/commercial construction, and residential construction.

Combining academic study with co-operative education work terms, the last two years of the program entail 72 credit hours. Students who graduate from the complete four-year program will earn a Bachelor of Technology in Construction Management. There is also an earlier exit point, after completion of the third year which will enable students to graduate with a Construction Technology diploma.

Technology graduates, particularly those with construction industry experience, may be eligible to enter the third year of the program, with some bridging courses. The third year of the program is offered on a full-time day program basis. However, many transferable courses are offered on a part-time basis through Continuing and Distance Education.

As is the case with all Red River College programming, Construction Management training is delivered by industry-experienced instructors and has a focus on practical application. It will also provide a basis for continued advancement.

"The Construction Management degree program will encompass technical foundation skills, some of the latest construction techniques, relevant work experience through co-operative education placements, and courses that lead to other credentials, such as the Canadian Construction Association Gold Seal certification," says Dr. Dale Watts, Dean of RRC's School of Construction and Engineering Technologies. "With experience, graduates of this program will be well-prepared to provide leadership in the construction industry."

And according to Nancy Wheatley, Chair of the School's Civil Engineering Technology department, the degree program will help graduates with their transition to managerial positions within the building industry: "This program is designed to offer focused and relevant learning to streamline the process of construction manager training. The enhanced understanding of construction management concepts from the degree program will prove valuable to students and will help employers to structure subsequent on-site work experience."

With an August 22nd start date for first-year students, a third-year full-time start date of October 24th, and a limited number of seats available, the program is anticipated to be popular among both recent high school graduates and those seeking to advance within the industry.

This degree program was introduced following extensive consultation with industry leaders about current needs. In fact, Construction Management graduates will be prepared — and counted upon — to step into high-skill positions and make an immediate contribution.

"This represents a whole new world of opportunity for students who want to pursue a career in the construction industry," adds Dr. Watts. "There is now and will continue to be a significant demand for qualified Construction Managers in Manitoba to address the construction industry's needs."

For more information about Red River College's new Construction Management degree program, please contact:

Nancy Wheatley, Department Chair, Civil Engineering Technology | E-mail: nwheatley@rrc.mb.ca Tel: 204.632.2221

Construction Management



DEGREE PROGRAM

Developed in consultation with industry, this new 4-year degree program represents an exceptional opportunity for students who are pursuing or who want to pursue a career in the construction industry. With a focus on residential, industrial, commercial and heavy construction, the program develops technical expertise, management, and leadership skills. Technology graduates, particularly those with construction industry experience, may be eligible to enter the third year of the program, with some bridging courses. The third year of the program is offered on a full-time day program basis. Many transferable courses are offered on a part-time basis through Continuing and Distance Education.

It also includes 6-month co-op work terms – so students can get paid while they learn and gain valuable hands-on experience. Graduates of the program will receive a Bachelor of Technology in Construction Management.

Third-year full-time program courses start October 24.
Some tuition support may be available.

 **RED RIVER COLLEGE**
To learn more, visit www.rrc.ca/construction

Have you participated in Manitoba's Aggregate Pit & Quarry Rehabilitation Program?

In 2010, over 332 hectares (820 acres) of land in depleted portions of gravel pits & quarries were rehabilitated to a safe and environmentally stable condition, compatible with neighbouring properties. This work was undertaken through 117 separate projects, carried out across the province through the hire of private heavy equipment by the Mines Branch, Manitoba Innovation, Energy & Mines.

This innovative program was an initiative of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, designed as a more efficient and economic way to deal with land dereliction problems that had given the industry a very negative public image. The absence of rehabilitation work in earlier decades made zoning approval for the opening of new pits and quarries problematic. A common local misperception is that mining inevitably leads to land dereliction. Through a collaborative process involving various government stakeholders and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, provisions were established in the 1991

Mines & Minerals Act to address rehabilitation of aggregate pits and quarries in a unique manner. The environmental levy of \$0.10 per tonne which is remitted by aggregate producers annually is held in a dedicated fund and used by Mines Branch to pay for rehabilitation work when applications are received from the land owner.

Since the inception of the program, 2,066 separate projects have been undertaken, rehabilitating an area of more than 8,370 hectares (20,670 acres). In addition to the positive environmental image and restored land productivity benefits, this work was carried out by COR certified private heavy equipment contractors in the province, contributing to local business and employment. Total expenditures over the last 20 years have amounted to \$26 million dollars.

Notwithstanding this success, there remains an urgent need for industry to make use of this program. Complacency and deferral of rehabilitation work in pits and quarries detracts from the intended benefits. It is much better to use the funds to carry out rehabilitation work on a progressive basis than to leave the monies accumulating in a government account. The department's established administrative practice allows projects less than \$25,000 in scope to be done by the owner through an hourly equipment rental agreement, while larger projects must be tendered and awarded to the lowest bidder.

If you are an aggregate producer, why not plan to carry out a rehabilitation project this year? It may be true that a gravel pit is never be fully depleted, but it is also true that there are depleted areas in every pit and quarry. Do your neighbours and yourselves a favour, and carry out some progressive rehabilitation each year. Make the program work for you.

Projects can be initiated quite simply by the submission of an application on-line through the Mines Branch webpage (see the link below for more information), or simply by calling the program manager, Brian Bailey, at (204)945-6516

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/stem/mrd/mines/sustain/quarry.html>



FYI:

THE MANITOBA HEAVY CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION 2011 ANNUAL DIRECTORY IS CURRENTLY AT THE PRINTER AND WILL BE MAILED TO ALL MEMBERS THE WEEK OF APRIL 18, 2011.

Contact Jason Rosin at 947-1379 or jason@mhca.mb.ca for any questions.

Surprise South of the Border?

By Peter Hall, Vice-President and Chief Economist of Export Development Canada

It's an economic adage well known to Canadians: the US sneezes, and we catch pneumonia. We don't suffer alone – this delicate constitution also afflicts the only other nation to share a long stretch of US border. It's only natural to expect that Mexico was ravaged by the US-led recession, and that it has shared the frustrating convalescence that followed. How is the Mexican economy doing?

To say that Mexico was pummeled by recession is an understatement. Following meagre 1.5% growth in 2008, the economy was slammed with a 6.1% drop in output, one of the worst drubbings suffered by any emerging market. Exports led the decline, tumbling 14% after barely increasing in 2008. The shock rattled the domestic economy, as consumer spending fell 5.7%, investment dropped 11% and the unemployment rate rose to 6%. Clearly, recession proved the adage to be true.

Domestic demand has been slow to recover. Consumer spending rose by 4.7% in 2010, but growth was a drag on overall GDP, and consumer confidence remains 15% below its previous peak. Rising by just 1.8%, investment weighed even further on performance. The government sector offered only a modest boost. All told, domestic growth in 2010 suggested that the adage was alive and well.

If so, trade performance should also have been tepid. Here's where the adage breaks down. Exports surged by 24.5% last year, enough to lift them 7% above the pre-recession peak. Mexico's industrial production is consistently outpacing US industrial growth, and quite unlike the latter, is now ahead of pre-recession levels and maintaining strong momentum – a testament to Mexico's efforts to attract key investments. Mexico's auto sector is again cranking out the same number of vehicles produced prior to the recession, in spite of the lack of recovery in US auto sales – a considerable achievement.

Current success stands in contrast with Mexico's well-known structural concerns. Labour force rigidities are a constraint on employment growth. Educational constraints threaten growth of the skills needed to further manufacturing growth. Private investment is weak, hampered by the difficulty of accessing capital. Competition is limited in key markets. And the sizable hidden economy together with well-publicized security concerns put further limitations on growth. Together, these factors contribute to relatively weak long-term potential growth, estimated at just 2.5% annually.

Compared with other emerging markets, potential growth this weak puts Mexico close to the bottom of the class. Effective reforms could change the picture radically. After all, labour force growth – a key pillar of potential – alone is 1.5-2% annually. Add in trend investment and reasonable productivity growth, and it's not hard to imagine sustainable growth at the 4% level, or even more.

Canadian exporters have benefited from Mexico's recent success. Pre-recession export growth to Mexico averaged 13% annually, and hit 15% last year, making Mexico a key part of Canada's recent trade diversification trend. Bilateral trade has shrugged off the recession, and is now well ahead of previous peaks. Investment flows are expected to follow, suggesting a shared bright future.

The bottom line? Mexico has surprised even itself with a robust export-led rebound that has been a big plus for Canada. Sustaining that momentum will be even better for both countries.



WORKSAFELY  **MHCA**



QUARTERLY COR™ MEETING

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE FIRST
WORKSAFELY QUARTERLY COR™ MEETING
TO BE HELD ON:

MONDAY - APRIL 18TH

11:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. (LUNCH INCLUDED)

AT THE

CANAD INN - 1405 ST. MATTHEWS

Guest Speakers:

Jacques St Hilaire - Workplace Safety & Health
Darren Oryniak - Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba

To Register contact:

Christal O'Brien-Frejuk
Training & Program Development Coordinator
christal@mhca.mb.ca

t (204) 594.9054
c (204) 795.7914
1236 Ellice Ave. | Winnipeg, MB | R3G 0E7

www.mhca.mb.ca



WORKSAFELY
MHCA

This Safety Talk is intended to bring awareness of workplace incidents and the measures to take to prevent recurrence. Print and review this talk with your staff, sign-off and post on a bulletin board. File for audit purposes (COR™ - Element #8 Training & Communications).

Flood Water Risks — Motorists

For updated flood information and road conditions, go to www.manitoba.ca, or call 204-945-3704.



Pay strict attention to road signs

Last week the 2011 flood in Manitoba had its first fatality. A Niverville man tried to cross a flooded portion of road in the RM of De Salaberry when his vehicle left the road and sank.

It is important that motorists be extremely cautious and pay strict attention to road signs when driving through flooded areas. If a road is flooded or marked closed, do not continue. Floodwaters are powerful and relentless and must be respected.

HAZARDS

- Soft road surfaces can give way under a vehicle's load and large potholes are often concealed beneath the surface.
- Watch carefully for signs of a moving current that may have affected the road ahead

- Water levels are often much deeper than they appear and driving through can cause serious damage to your vehicle.
 - Be on the lookout for flooding at highway dips, bridges and low areas.
 - Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
 - Flood waters are extremely cold and hypothermia can set in quickly.
 - Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
 - Before you head to your destination, call the Provincial Highways Department at 945-3704 or local RCMP for updated highway information.
 - Always wait for the water to recede and ensure it's safe to enter before retrieving a vehicle in a flooded area.
 - As little as six inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle and cause serious damage. Always use caution when approaching road beds that have been impacted by flood water.
- The most important thing to remember when approaching a flooded road is: *When in doubt, don't try it.*

PREVENTION

- If possible, stay away from flooded areas until all danger has passed. Don't endanger yourself and your passengers by sightseeing or taking unnecessary risks.
- Always prepare an alternative route before you leave in case the road you want to travel is closed.

Test Your Knowledge

- It is important to watch for signs of moving current that may have affected the road ahead. True False
- Water levels are usually more shallow than they appear. True False
- It is harder to recognize flood dangers at night. True False
- As little as 8 inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle. True False
- It is important to check road conditions before traveling. True False





Construction Safety Excellence™

COR™ Training



CENTRAL REGION – WINNIPEG, MB

April 25-29, 2011

St. John Ambulance, 1 St. John Ambulance Way

April 25-26	April 27	April 28-29
COR™ Leadership	COR™ Principles	COR™ Auditor



INSTRUCTORS: DENINE RODRIGUES (LEFT) AND GREG HUFF (RIGHT), SAFETY ADVISORS

CENTRAL REGION – WINNIPEG, MB

May 16-20, 2011

St. John Ambulance, 1 St. John Ambulance Way

May 16-17	May 18	May 19-20
COR™ Leadership	COR™ Principles	COR™ Auditor



INSTRUCTORS: DENINE RODRIGUES (LEFT) AND PHIL MCDANIEL (RIGHT), SAFETY ADVISORS

Construction Safety Officer Exams



WORKSAFELY will be holding an Exam for those who have been accepted and have met the requirements through the Construction Safety Officer (CSO) application.

Construction Safety Officer (CSO) Exam

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
April 29, 2011
MHCA Office
1236 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg

**INSTRUCTOR:
PHIL MCDANIEL
SAFETY ADVISOR**

Coming Soon: New WORKSAFELY COR™ Banners!

Watch for the new WORKSAFELY COR™ Banners coming soon, and ensure to get your FREE banner for your company worksite. Watch the Heavy News Weekly for details on when the banners will be available.

WORKSAFELY MHCA

Construction Safety Excellence™

Training Schedule



Register by:

- » Email: Heather DeJaegher at safety@mhca.mb.ca
- » Fax: 204-943-2279

Cancellation Policy:

The *WORKSAFELY* policy states cancellation must be made at least two business days in advance, otherwise full course fee charge will apply.

APRIL 2011	
April 8	COR™ Auditor Refresher
April 12-13	Train the Trainer
April 14	WHMIS (1/2 day AM)/ TDG (1/2 Day PM)
April 15	Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
April 15	Flagperson (1/2 day PM)
April 15	First Aid 1 — CPR
April 18	Safety Administrator
April 19-20	Confined Space Entry Level 2
April 20	Back Injury Prevention
April 20	Fatigue Management
April 21	Toolbox Talks
April 25-26	COR™ Leadership
April 27	COR™ Principles
April 28-29	COR™ Auditor

MAY 2011	
May 9-10	Train the Trainer
May 9-11	WHMIS (1/2 day AM)/ TDG (1/2 Day PM)
May 12	COR™ Auditor Refresher (1/2 day AM)
May 13	Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
May 13	Flagperson (1/2 day PM)
May 16-17	COR™ Leadership
May 18	COR™ Principles
May 19-20	COR™ Auditor
May 20	First Aid 1 — CPR

CSO EXAM SCHEDULE	
April 29 (Exam)	MHCA Office

REMINDER:

WORKSAFELY requires at least six people registered to deliver the course.

Customized training is available for your specific requirements.

Call the *WORKSAFELY* Office at (204) 947-1379 for more information.